

Childcare Zoning Review Meeting Summary

Subject: Child Care

Attendees: Joel Dock, Ashley Butler, Cassie Armstrong, Chris French, Dawn Thompson, Emily Liu, Joe Reverman, Liz McQuillen, Mandy Simpson, Tony Peyton, Caitlin Bowling, Brady Hill, Cori, Hans Peterson, JR, Megan Short, Susan Allen, Terry Tolan, Laura Thomas, Amy Brooks, Ashley Brandt, Asia Rivers, Tara Sorrels, Brian Davis.

Date: 10/5/21 (WebEx – virtual)

Time: 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Summary:

- Heard from panel of local childcare advocates who are working to improve access and availability of high-quality childcare in areas that are currently without childcare. The panel included Councilwoman Chambers-Armstrong, Dawn Thompson of Community Coordinated Child Care (4C), Ashley Butler of Lift-a-Life Novak Family Foundation, Mandy Simpson of Metro United Way, and Liz McQuillen of Greater Louisville, Inc. (GLI). The panel discussed access to quality childcare, equity, and workforce implications of childcare in Louisville, KY.
 - <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/metro-council-district-8>
 - <https://www.4cforkids.org/>
 - <https://www.liftalifefoundation.org/>
 - <https://metrounitedway.org/>
 - <https://www.greaterlouisville.com/>
- Joel Dock (Planning and Design Services) made a presentation on zoning and regulations controlling childcare centers within the Land Development Code. Data was shown describing how many CUP applications Planning and Design Services (PDS) received prior to and after Docket 15336 in 2011, which made the R-4 and R-5 districts (60% of land area) ineligible to request a conditional use permit. Data from pre- and post-pandemic childcare issues were presented. The Greater Louisville Project (<https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/early-childhood/>) revealed that the lowest availability of childcare is in Southwest and West Louisville. Covid-19 exacerbated an already urgent childcare issue. Explained that zoning cannot change state laws, but zoning can regulate where different types of childcare programs may be located, appearance, parking, and landscaping. Upcoming in-person engagements were promoted and information on how to contact PDS, provide comments, and sign-up for GovDelivery were provided.
 - <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/planning-design/changes-childcare-regulations>
 - <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/planning-design/notifications>
- Public Discussion:
 - Childcare providers currently located in an R-4 or R-5 zone with a CUP are unable to expand because the CUP is no longer available for those districts. Rezoning is costly and not a feasible expenditure for many small business owners.

- When looking to open a childcare center in the county (R-4 and R-5 zones), you are limited to whatever currently exists as a childcare center, which is not adequate. It is a risk to invest due to zoning issues and the costs that come with them.
- Parking requirements are another barrier to renovating/expanding existing facilities. Parking calculations were revised to place the parking determination on the Director or designee of PDS.
- Childcare has an important link to transportation and the economy. When childcare is difficult to afford, people are not spending money in other sectors of the economy.
- Right now, childcare is either in-home or a larger center, and there is nothing in-between.
- Variety of scales and capacities in all areas is important to provide access to all. Many peer cities use a tiered capacity system for childcare which PDS is reviewing.
- Possibilities for childcare in conjunction with employers in industrial zones to attract and retain employees are being reviewed by PDS.
- R-4 and R-5 zones were removed from being eligible zones to obtain a CUP for childcare in 2011. Because of this, we are missing childcare centers in key areas where people live – up to 100 applicants for childcare are missing in Louisville Metro. The connection between schools, childcare, and community service/benefit were discussed.
- Businesses are having a hard time attracting employees and are considering childcare as an incentive. Staff will need to determine the definitions and whether an employer childcare would be an accessory use and whether it would be open to the public or have restrictions as to who can use the daycare.
- Childcare providers are also small businesses and part of this review should help them do their business more smoothly and efficiently which in turn will help with accessibility and affordability.
- Poll questions showed that we had interested residents, parents, and operators or employees present at the meeting, that attendees had no preference or preferred programs with 10 or fewer children, and attendees said childcare programs should be available in both residential and commercial areas.

Follow-up:

- In-person engagements on childcare:
 - October 9, 10am, Petersburg Park
 - October 10, 1pm, California Park
 - October 11, 4pm, Iroquois Park
 - October 14, 4pm, Hounz Lane Park